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FOR THE RELIGIOUS MONITOR.

ORDINATION CHARGES, &c.

On the 20th of August, 1828, the Associate Presbytery of Philadelphia ordained to the holy ministry, and the pastoral charge of the united congregations of Mercersburgh and McConnelstown, Mr. Finlay W. McNaughton; and likewise Mr. John Kendall, as a Missionary. Mr. Whyte preached, and Mr. Clarkson presided, &c. as mentioned in our number for September. And after giving the right hand of fellowship to the persons ordained, the following charges were delivered by the Rev. Francis Pringle.

TO MR. McNAUGHTON.

Rev. and Dear Brother—

If old age, and more than fifty years service in the ministry of reconciliation, might be supposed to afford peculiar advantage for suggesting something appropriate on the present occasion, it might not unreasonably be expected from me. "I said days should speak, and the multitude of years should teach wisdom." But on these grounds, I renounce all claim to attention, and would count it no humiliation to listen and learn from the youngest of my brethren. Nothing, but what you will readily anticipate, can I propose to offer. But we often need to be reminded of what we do know; and the following particulars are submitted, as not unworthy of consideration.

You have already contemplated the great importance of the sacred office with which, according to the scriptural order, you have been solemnly invested—by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. The official names given in scripture to those who are called to serve God in the gospel of his Son, very significantly express the importance of their work. Are they *watchmen, shepherds, stewards, soldiers*? Are they *labourers* and *builders, bishops or overseers*? Are they said to be *am-*

bassadors for Christ, *pastors* and *teachers*, given for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ? What solemn obligations do these, and the like characters, involve! What qualifications do they show to be necessary for the right discharge of the pastoral office!—And how indispensable it is, to act therein, as becomes the devoted servants of Christ, with unshaken firmness and fidelity; with ardent zeal; with unwearied diligence and assiduity; with self-denial, and a vigorous exercise of their various talents!—Imitating the example of the great apostle of the Gentiles, who “shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God, that he might be pure from the blood of all men; testifying both to Jews and Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ;”—And exemplifying his comprehensive direction—“Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the holy Ghost hath made you overseers; and feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”—With which agrees the exhortation of the apostle of the circumcision—“Feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.” Nay, Christ himself is our pattern, of whom it is written—“The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” And who says—“My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” His devotion to the Father, as one observes, had the force of appetite; to do his Father’s will, was to keep a feast; and on his heavenly mind moral motives had the effect of necessity. “*I must work the works of him that sent me.*”

In undertaking the ministerial office, and the pastoral charge of this people, you profess to be influenced by a sincere love to God, zeal for his glory, a true regard for the honour of the Redeemer, and a cordial concern for the souls of men. You will still see it needful to be on your guard against the insinuation of contrary motives, of corrupt and sinister views, of undue regard to the applause of men, or worldly advantage. It will readily occur, indeed, that in our church, or religious association, there is little temptation to the indulgence of carnal ambition, or desire of filthy lucre, or of great things for ourselves. But the narrowness of the sphere in which to act these evil principles or dispositions, does not supercede the necessity of watching and praying against their influence. It is desirable, and what ministers and preachers, acting faithfully, have a right to, from those who enjoy their services, to have needful support. “The la-

bourer is worthy of his reward." And it is desirable to have so much evidence of acceptance among a people, as may be some encouragement in their work. But our Lord has warned us of the danger of aiming at popularity, or seeking the honour that cometh from man. "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?" It is in the language of reprobation, that it is recorded of some, that "they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God;" and that Christ represents the Jewish teachers, as "loving the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats at the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi." But, to his apostles, he says—"Be ye not called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

Keep habitually in view the great end,—to accomplish which, the gospel ministry is the principal appointed means,—the salvation of precious souls to the glory of God. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." For this end, you are called to preach the word, to preach Christ and him crucified, to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, determining, with Paul, to know nothing among your people, but Christ and him crucified. "We preach not ourselves," says he, "but Christ Jesus the Lord." Thus, as a pastor after God's own heart, feed your people with knowledge and understanding.—"Study in all things to approve yourself unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth;" "not handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending yourself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech which cannot be condemned."

That your profiting may appear to all men, and that no man may despise thy youth, "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and the people should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." "Neglect not the gift that is in thee. Meditate on these things. Give thyself wholly to them." As regular a course of study as practicable, will be necessary. And here, there is no need that I should remind you, that the sacred books of the Old and New Testaments, have an exclusive claim to be the subject of your daily, diligent, prayerful study, so far as respects the matter of your ministry, the doctrines to be taught, and the duties to be inculcated, with the authority with which they are to be supported and enforced. And

whatever distinction it may be allowable to make among doctrines and duties, in regard to their relative importance in the system of revealed religion, you will guard, I trust, against giving any countenance to the idea, that any truth or any duty, is to be rejected or overlooked, as of little value, not worth teaching, not worth professing or contending for. Let it ever be remembered, that whatever the most high God has seen meet to reveal, we are under obligation to believe; whatever he is pleased to enjoin, we are bound to do. Resting on the same authority, they have an equal claim to our belief and obedience. "Hold fast the form of sound words." "Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." "The holy scriptures, which you have known from a child, and which are able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus." The scriptures, which are "given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." These scriptures, I say, perused with the reverence and attention due from the minister of Christ, will be found an inexhaustible store of matter to occupy your whole ministry. And considering the superior advantage you have had, in your course of preparation for the sacred ministry, for cultivating an acquaintance with the divine originals of the inspired volumes, you will not forget how incumbent it is to consult the scriptures in the languages in which they were first written. The improvements of the age in biblical criticism, seem to require increased attention to that branch of study. But although the Bible is alone to be referred to as the rule of faith and practice, and to have a marked preference in a minister's subjects of study, he may find a valuable auxiliary in some branches of literature, which are not immediately connected with his sacred calling. And every lawful kind of knowledge may, so far as it can, be consecrated to the service of the sanctuary.—And as the press is still teeming with new publications, on almost every subject, something valuable, as opportunity offers, may be learned from them. And as is said of lord Bacon, so renowned in the republic of letters, that he lighted his torch at every man's candle, so we are never to imagine ourselves above the need of enlarging our stock of knowledge from the works of the dead or of the living.

In preparing for the pulpit, let due care be taken that the composition and language of your discourses be such as may most readily convey the truths delivered to the minds of the hearers. Paul professes that "in the church he would rather speak five

words with his understanding," that is intelligibly, so as to be understood, "that by his voice he might edify others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." As he elsewhere declares, that Christ sent him to preach the gospel, "not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect;" and that when he came to the Corinthians, "he came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto them the testimony of God." "Which things," he says again, "we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the holy Ghost teacheth. Let perspicuity be ever preferred to ornament.

Be much in prayer. Let all your studies, exercises, and labours, be accompanied with fervent supplications to the throne of grace. In this way implore the divine blessing, without which you cannot expect success in public service, nor comfort in your own soul. Earnestly seek increasing experience of the gracious influence on your own heart and life of those truths which you are called to deliver to others; a growing experimental acquaintance with the life and power of religion; more and more of the saving knowledge of Christ, and divine things.—And here it may be of use to reflect, how dreadful it must be to preach an unknown Saviour! To proclaim that gospel which the preacher himself does not believe! To inculcate those duties as necessary to the glory of God, and the life of the Christian, of which he makes no conscience! To propose to others that comfort and encouragement, to which he is a stranger!

Thinking of the awful responsibility attached to your office, of the greatness of the trust committed to you, of your own weakness, and of the trials, temptations, and difficulties you may have to encounter, you may be ready to exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Let what supported and comforted Paul himself, comfort you; "not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not." Have you a warfare to maintain?—the blessed captain of salvation sends none a warfare on their own charges. "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." And while giving yourself to the ministry of the word and to prayer, apply the direction and the promise addressed by the divine Head of the church, to the angel of the church in Smyrna—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—

And now, my dear brother, suffer me, in conclusion, to remind you of the solemn charge of Paul to his son Timothy, a charge no less appropriate, when applied to you and other ministers, than to him. "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom be honour and power everlasting. AMEN."

TO THE PEOPLE.

Your eyes now behold your teacher. Your unanimous wish, rendered necessary by the resignation of your late pastor, has been so far fulfilled. One called to break the bread of life among you has been ordained to the holy ministry in your presence, and with a particular relation to you, as his immediate charge. The sum of your obligations to him as your pastor, is aptly expressed in the call you have given him. In that instrument you have unitedly engaged to give him all due support, respect, encouragement and obedience in the Lord. So doing, ye shall do well. But to be a little more particular. One of the most obvious ways in which you can expect either to encourage him, or to derive benefit and edification from his ministry, is by a careful, conscientious attendance upon it. Is it a leading branch of his office to preach the word? It can be no less incumbent on you to hear it. So far as outward means are concerned, the word, especially the word preached, is the grand means of heaven's appointment, in the case of adult persons, of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation. "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those that preach the gospel of peace, and bring good tidings of good things. So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Let no excuse, therefore, which you may not rest in as approved of God, detain you from the sanctuary. And let it be your concern to attend with that solemnity of spirit, and that devotedness of purpose, with which Cornelius, and the congregation assembled in his house, waited on Peter. "Now, therefore, are we all here present before God, to hear all things which are commanded thee of God." Alas! for the want of attention, seriousness and affection, apparent with too many hearers of the gospel. Let me earnestly recommend to your regard in this matter, that question

in the Shorter Catechism, How is the word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation ?—and the answer subjoined. That the word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation and prayer; receive it with faith and love; lay it up in our heart and practice it in our life. In case of neglecting these things, which there is reason to suspect is too common, what salutary effect can be expected from the word, however faithfully dispensed ? “The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.” Let all means of instruction, private and public, be well attended. The encouragement which you promise, can imply no less; and a true regard to your own best interest, and that of your families, children and domestics, requires it.—And here it may not be improper to observe, that it is in a special manner incumbent on such members of the congregation as have been set apart to public office in it, as ruling elders, not only to co-operate with their pastor in the exercise of government and discipline, but in various other ways competent to them, to contribute to the comfort and success of his ministry. And let both teaching and ruling elders enjoy that deference and respect from the rest of the congregation, to which their office entitles them. “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.” “And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves.”

And if even a Paul was solicitous for the prayers of the churches, on his behalf, that “utterance might be given him, that he might open his mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,” let your pastor have a deep interest in your prayers, that he may be richly endowed with all ministerial gifts and graces; that he may excel to the edifying of the church; may be eminently blessed in all his labours; may have many seals of his ministry; and thus have abundant cause to rejoice in the day of Christ, that he has not run in vain, nor laboured in vain. And for this purpose, be it your earnest care to “do all things without murmuring and disputing; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, shining as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.”

Considering the measures adopted to secure the regular payment of the salary proposed, it may be deemed somewhat super-

fluous to press the duty of contributing to your pastor's temporal support. To do so, so far as to exempt him, as far as possible, from the necessity of entangling himself with the affairs of this life, I flatter myself, you feel to be your duty. "Even as the Lord hath ordained, that they who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel." "Let him, then, that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth, in all good things." And now may the Lord fulfil his promise in your experience—"From this day will I bless you."

But, brethren, when I reflect on the intimate relation which for many years subsisted between me and a portion, at least, of this congregation, it seems to be peculiarly proper for me to congratulate you on the events of this day; and to express my grateful acknowledgments that, in the sovereign ordering of providence, I have been called and enabled to take a part in the solemn transactions in which we have been engaged; and that, in my declining years, I have been favoured with the opportunity of witnessing one comfortable settlement after another, in different congregations in the bounds of the Presbytery, which had no existence when the Presbytery was formed; and when all the members, who then belonged to it, except myself, have rested from their labours. May I not say,—“What hath the Lord wrought?”

TO MR. KENDALL.

Rev. and Dear Brother—

What more can I say to you, than what you have already heard in my address to our brother, the pastor of this congregation?—Whatever regards the object of the gospel ministry, the qualifications necessary for the office, the diligence, the faithfulness, the zeal, the dependence to be exercised in prosecuting their ministry; whatever has been suggested on these and kindred topics, is no less applicable to you. But it may not be improper to call your attention to the apostle's words to Timothy, relative to this subject. "It is a faithful saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." A work of the highest importance to the best interests of mankind; a work in which it is truly honourable to be employed, viz. proclaiming the glad tidings of a Saviour, and of a free and full salvation to sinners of mankind. In an admiring sense of the distinguished privilege and honour vouchsafed to himself in this matter, the apostle Paul thus writes—"Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." We cannot, how-

ever be blind to the difficulties with which it is attended. Difficulties arising from the work itself, requiring much study; and much study is a weariness to the flesh. Though it be a good work, it is still a work not to be performed without indefatigable attention and application. Difficulties arising from a minister's own weakness and corruptions, and from the opposition of Satan and of the world. Such considerations might operate as an effectual discouragement to our engaging in, or prosecuting, this work, were it not for the words of Christ to his afflicted servant. "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." In the full assurance of the truth of that saying, we may adopt the bold and triumphant language of the apostle—"None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." But passing this as of general application to all engaged in the work of the ministry, the mission on which you are appointed, might be thought to call for some remarks more directly bearing upon that appointment.

I remark, then, that a more enlarged sphere of usefulness is thereby presented to you, than to the pastor of a particular congregation, so far at least as regards the diversity of places you have to visit, and the classes of people to whose service, and for whose benefit, the mission is designed. With some propriety, perhaps, you may be advised to keep in view the example of the great apostle of the uncircumcision, in becoming all things to all men, so far as may consist with fidelity to your office; without, therefore, compromising any part of the profession which you have solemnly avouched—"Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ;" walking in the same spirit, and in the same steps. Here is need of wisdom; "the wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

The mission upon which you are about to enter will undoubtedly occasion toil and fatigue of body. Like your predecessors in the same employ, you may meet with bad roads and deep waters. And what may be more trying, you may have to encounter difficulties arising from ignorance, from prejudice, from enmity to the truth, or that particular testimony for the truth, which we have espoused. Even where a great door and effectual is opened to preachers, there may be many adversaries. But you have no reason to fear being exposed, like Paul, to "perils of robbers, to perils by the heathen, to perils in the city, to per-

ils in the sea, to perils among false brethren." You are not sent to a heathen people, to an uncivilized country. Those to whom you go, speak the same language with ourselves, and differ little, if any thing, in their habits and manners; nay, many of them have belonged to the same religious association. They are prepared to receive you, to bid you welcome. They have given unequivocal evidence of their solicitude to enjoy the dispensation of gospel ordinances, provided by the Synod. This they have done, both by the petitions which they have forwarded to that effect, and by their contributions and subscriptions, considered, in their circumstances, liberal, to be applied in defraying the expense incurred by such missions. And while one particular object of the present mission is to visit the brethren to whom your predecessors have preached the word of the Lord, to see how they do, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith; it is to be hoped and prayed for, that not a few who are yet without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world, may be gathered into his fold. "Other sheep," he says, "I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd." What an honour to be employed as an agent to carry into effect this grand and gracious purpose! This is the service to which you are appointed.

And now, my dear brother, while your principal dependence, under all conscious weakness, and the intervening difficulties in the course of your mission, for all needed supply of grace and wisdom, strength and comfort, is the promise of Christ to the apostles, when he gave them a commission to "go and teach all nations—lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,"—a promise which serves as a permanent, unfailing source of encouragement to every conscientious minister of Christ.—While, I say, this is to be your grand resource, the character of your associates in the mission, may not improperly, I think, be brought forward as a pledge that you will not be disappointed in any reasonable expectation of assistance from them. From the discretion, the good sense, and the good temper of your worthy colleagues, you may calculate on receiving important aid in whatever concerns the mission. While your ready co-operation, and exertions in the missionary field, are confidently relied on, their piety and zeal will animate you. And especially the brother who has performed such a tour before, and with whom, according to appointment, you are to spend the longest time on the

mission, will be found eminently qualified by his previous knowledge of persons and places, to facilitate the operations called for, to accomplish the end proposed. Go, then, in the name and strength of the Lord of hosts. And under his auspices, we trust the report of the present mission will not be found less encouraging, however much more so it may be, than those with which the Synod have already been favoured. "Grace be with thee." AMEN.

Selections.

AN ANTIDOTE AGAINST ARMINIANISM.

[Continued from page 226.]

OF ARMINIANISM IN GENERAL.

IT hath ever been the lot of truth (like the Lord of it) to be crucified between right-hand and left-hand thieves. Truth's enemies, on all hands, are various. While some say the Bible is a legend of lies, and declare that faith in Christ is a fable; there are others who tell us they have Christ, and are one with Christ, and yet with audacious effrontery cry down the ordinances of the gospel, and consider the means of grace as too burthensome for a free-born conscience, and too low and carnal for a seraphic spirit. There is as much *beyond* the truth, as on this side thereof: as much in out running the flock of Christ, and the Lamb that leads them; as in straggling and loitering behind. Truth hath evermore observed the *golden mean*. The Socinians decry the divinity of Christ and his satisfaction, as if his sufferings were exemplary only, not expiatory. The Roman Catholics turn the true worship of God into will-worship, and teach their own traditions, for the commandments of God; spoiling God's institutions with man's inventions. And the ARMINIANS do call the justice of God to the bar of *reason*: They dare confidently wade in the deep ocean of divine mysteries: and in stating the decrees of God, where blessed Paul could find no bottom, but cried out *O the depth!* &c. Rom. xi. 33. they dare undertake to fetch the apostle from off his nonplus, saying, "God foresaw that Jacob *would* believe, and that Esau *would not* believe; therefore, the one was loved, and the other hated." Thus Arminius's school teacheth deeper divinity, than Paul learned in the *third heaven*. And they do not only, with the Socinians, gratify the pride of man's reason, but also the pride of man's *will*, in extenuating and lessening both the guilt and filth of *original sin*; even as *Poper*y, their elder sister, doth gratify the pride of outward sense. Hence Dr. Leighton calls Arminianism, "the Pope's *Benjamin*, the last

and greatest monster of the man of sin, the *Elixer of Anti-Christianism*, the mystery of the mystery of iniquity, the Pope's *Cabinet*, the very quintessence of equivocation." Alike hereunto Mr. Rous (Master of Eton College) addeth, saying, "Arminianism is the *spawn* of Popery, which the warmth of favour may easily turn into Frogs of the bottomless pit." And what are the *new* Arminians, but the varnished offspring of the *old* Pelagians; that makes the grace of God to *lacquey* it at the foot, or rather, the will of man. That makes the sheep, to keep the shepherd. That puts God into the same extremity with Darius, who would gladly have saved Daniel, but could *not*. Dan. vi. 14. What else can their doctrine signify, which they call a prescience or foreknowledge in God; the truth whereof depends, not on the decree of God, but on the free-will of the creature? This is to make the creature have no dependence on the Creator, and to fetter divine Providence. Thus that fatal necessity, which they would cast at our doors, unavoidably remains at theirs; and (according to their scheme) God must say *thus* unto man, "O my poor creature, that fatal fortune which hath harmed you must be endured more than bewailed, for it was from all eternity before my providence, I could not hinder, I could not but consent to those fatal contingencies; and unavoidable fate hath, whether I *will* or *no*, pronounced the inevitable sentence." What else is this but to overthrow all those graces of faith, hope, &c. to expectorate (to cast off) all vital godliness; and to pull the great Jehovah himself out of his throne of glory, setting up dame fortune to be worshipped in his stead? These, and many other great abominations have been discovered in the "chambers of imagery" in our days; and is nothing but measuring supernatural mysteries with the crooked *metewand* of degenerate reason. Wisdom is too high for a fool, Prov. xxiv. 7. In these points it was once well said, "give me a *mortified* reason," for, to prescribe to God's *infinite* understanding, and to allow him no reasons to guide his determinations by, but what we are acquainted withal, is extremely arrogant. Reason must neither be the rule to measure faith by, nor the judge thereof. We may give a reason of our believing, to wit, "because it is written," but, not of all things believed, as *why* Jacob was loved and Esau hated, before they had done either good or evil; this was the counsel of God's own will.—Touching such sublime mysteries our faith stands upon *two sure bottoms*; the first is, that the being, wisdom, and power of God, doth infinitely transcend ours; so may reveal matters far above our reach: the second is, that whatsoever God reveals is undoubtedly true, and to be believed, although the bottom of it cannot be

sounded by the line of our reason: because man's reason is not absolute, but variously limited, perplexed with its own frailty, and defective in its own actings.

OF PREDESTINATION.

I shall, First, state the doctrine of divine Predestination as revealed in the Bible. Second, consider the Arminian's view thereof, viz. That it is conditional, upon the foresight of faith, works, Perseverance, &c.

First. The doctrine of *Predestination*.

Predestination is the decree of God, whereby (according to the counsel of his own will) he fore-ordained some of mankind to eternal life, and refused or passed by others; for the praise of his glorious mercy and justice. Some are vessels of mercy, others are vessels of wrath. "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of his mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?" Rom. ix. 22, 23. In a great house are various vessels both for use and ornament; vessels of honour, and vessels of dishonour, 2 Tim. ii. 20. and the master of the house hath a right to, and can wisely use, all his vessels. God hath his use even of Pharaoh, and of the church's greatest enemies; if it be but *skullion-work*, to brighten vessels of mercy by them. God hath appointed the elect unto glory; and he hath by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, fore-ordained all the means thereunto: such as, redemption by Christ, regeneration by the Holy Ghost, effectual calling and conversion, justification in the court of conscience by saving faith in Jesus's merits, sanctification in the heart by the Spirit, producing holy living and walking with God and man. And these blessed participators are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, 1 Pet. i. 5. Whom he did predestinate, *them* he also called; and whom he called, *them* he also justified; and whom he justified, *them* he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? We will say with the Apostle, "God hath not appointed *us* to wrath, but to obtain salvation." 1 Thes. v. 9.

It is called *destination*, as it comprehends a determined order, of the means to the end; and *pre-destination*, because God appointed this order in and with himself, before the actual existence of those things so ordered. The Greek word signifies a fore-separating for God's special use; as Israel was separated

from among all the nations of the world, to be God's peculiar inheritance. "I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people. The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth," Levit. xx. 24. Deut. vii. 6. "I have separated you to become vessels of mercy, members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Ghost, before all time, even from all eternity." As divine *Prescience* is sometimes largely taken for predestination, Rom. xi. 2. God hath not cast away his people, which he foreknew, that is whom he did predestinate; so in like manner, predestination is taken strictly and in part for election itself, Rom. viii. 30. Eph. i. 5. I shall handle it accordingly in this following treatise, using the words election and predestination promiscuously. Predestination is also called a divine decree, because it contains in it the determinate counsel of God, and the counsel of his own will, in bringing to pass such and such *ends*, by such and such means. "Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus; Herod &c. were gathered together for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done," Acts iv. 28. "Having predestinated us—according to the good pleasure of his will," Eph. i. 5. "Being predestinated according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." ver. 11. The election and predestination of the Lord is in scripture phrase, termed the hand, the determinate counsel, the purpose, the good pleasure of God. Acts ii. 23. Eph. i. 9.

This divine decree of predestination hath various properties; it is eternal, unchangeable, absolute, free, discriminating, and extensive.

The *first* property of the divine decree: It is ETERNAL.

This is proved from the following reasons.

1. God's internal and immanent acts are the same with his essence, such an act is the divine decree; and therefore, as God's essence is eternal, so his decree must be eternal also. Now the decree is God's decreeing, because whatever is in God, is God; it is God himself by one eternal act, decreeing and determining whatsoever should come, unto the praise of his own glory.

2. The second reason is deduced from the simplicity of God, which is, God considered as one mere and perfect act, without any composition or succession. There can be no more a new thought, a new intent, or a new purpose in God, than there can be a new God. Whatever God thinks, he ever thought; and always doth and will think: whatever God purposes, he always

purposed; and ever doth and will purpose. He saith, "I know the thoughts I think concerning you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end." Jer. xxix. 11. As he cannot know any thing new, neither can he intend any thing new; for his name is, I AM. He takes not new counsels, as man; neither draws up new determinations.

3. The third reason is taken from Christ. If Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (as he is called Rev. xiii. 8.) then predestination to life must needs be *before* time; because Christ is the foundation of election, we are elected *in* him, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world," Eph. i. 4, and predestinated *by* him, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself." Eph. i. 5. Christ is the *means*. Now the *end* cannot be of a *later* date and determination than the *means* to that end: they have relation to each other. And if Christ be the eternal purpose of the Father, the act of electing in Christ must needs be his eternal purpose also.

4. The scripture expressly proves the *eternity* of the decree, saying, it was "before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9. Titus i. 2. and "before the foundation of the world," Eph. i. 4. and it was an eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Eph. iii. 11.

5. It is the royal prerogative of the great Jehovah, to order as well as appoint things that are coming and that shall come, "I appointed the ancient people, and the things that are coming, and shall come." Isaiah xlv. 7. None can appoint God the time. He saith, "Who is like *me*, and who will appoint *me* the time?" Jer. l. 44. Hence time is said to travel with those eternal decrees of God, and brings forth the accomplishment of them in their proper season; and the decree will bring forth, (before the decree bring forth) Zeph. ii. 2. It is pregnant till then.—Every thing hath its accomplishment in *time*, which was decreed to fall out from all *eternity*.

6. If human concerns have this encomium, that *these are ancient things*, 1 Chron. iv. 22. how much more the divine decree, which is not the work of *yesterday*. If the negative part of predestination [the ungodly] were of old ordained, Jude 4. then much more the positive. God's purpose of loving Jacob, as well as hating Esau, was before they had done either good or evil. Rom. ix. 11.

Objection. Some may object, saying, "We grant God's prescience or foreknowledge to be eternal, but not his predestination; that choice or election mentioned in 1 Cor. i. 27, 28, 29, must be a temporal, not an eternal election."

Answer, 1. With God, the knowledge of things that shall come to pass, must follow the decree thereof: for things must first be decreed, and then foreseen in that being which they have in the decree: In this sense prescience pre-supposes predestination.—“Known unto God are *all his works* from the beginning of the world.” Acts xv. 18. God hath not an imperfect, but a thorough fore knowledge of all future things; the means and the end; not only as they may be, but also as they shall be, by his divine determination.

2. Prescience, or foreknowledge, is taken for God’s love from eternity; “Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate,” Rom. viii. 29. that is, whom he fore-loved, so Zanchius reads it: “Whom he fore-knew, not only with the knowledge of observation, but with the knowledge of approbation also; he fore-knew them to be his. So it is predestination itself; and to grant an eternal prescience without an eternal predestination, is to break the links of that golden chain in Rom. viii. 29, 30. “God hath not, and God will not, cast away his people, which he fore-knew,” Rom. xi. 2.

3. Some grant a predestination eternal to the elect only, but to the non-elect only a prescience or naked foresight, (without any pre-ordination) lest they should make God the author of the creature’s sin and ruin. But these men fear where no fear is; for the worst evil act that ever was committed in the world, to wit, the crucifying of the Prince of glory, Jesus Christ, did not only fall under the fore-knowledge of God, but also under his determinate counsel, “Him being delivered by his determinate counsel, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” Acts ii, 23, and iv. 28, the taking and apprehension of Christ was not barely fore-known, but unchangeably determined.

4. Even suppose it be granted, that the apostle speaks of a temporal election or choice, in 1 Cor. i. 27, &c. yet that signifies no more than our vocation or calling; and temporal reprobation intimates no more than men’s obduration. The accomplishment of both these is granted to be in time, so may not be confounded with this eternal decree of God: these are but fruits and effects of that eternal decree.

INFERENCES DRAWN FROM THE FOREGOING.

1. Is God’s love eternal? Then Satan cannot get beyond, or between this love of God and us; for it was before the world was, and so before Satan was.

* “The opinion of Zanchius is worth a thousand others.”—DE COETREY.

2. Austin tells a curious fool, that asked what God did before the world was made, *that he made Hell for such as him*: But this teaches us, that God was choosing us to himself before the world began: O Wonderful!

3. If so, believer, then thy saintship and sufferings have eternal glory wrapped up in them. All this comfort is lost in the contrary doctrine.

[To be continued.]

A LETTER

From a Scotch gentleman to his friend in Ireland: containing some observations upon the manner of swearing oaths by touching and kissing the gospels. Being partly *Excerpts* from an anonymous book, entitled, *The new mode of Swearing, tactis et deosculatis evangeliiis*, published about 1717.

Signa cum ad Res Divinas pertinent Sacramenta apellantur.

August. Epist. 5. ad Marcel.

Printed at Glasgow 1752, and supposed to have been written by the late Dr. Clark, author of *Plain Reasons*, &c.

[We insert this letter in the hope that it may arrest the serious attention of some who have not duly considered the subject to which it relates. The swearing of an oath is a direct appeal to the living God, and a solemn act of religious worship: and the manner and form in which it should be engaged in, are prescribed in the divine oracles. Yet this manner and form has been, and still is, not only awfully departed from, but thousands in this land are involved in the most unwarrantable and horrible oaths; and thousands of others, kiss the book in taking an oath, lawful in itself considered, if administered and taken according to divine appointment, without the least apprehension, or compunction of conscience, and perhaps without the least thought; and thus is the holy name of the Lord our God profaned and blasphemed. Besides, we consider this letter worthy of record as a memorial of other times, and as a conclusive argument on the subject of which it treats; and because it evinces a due regard to the authority of God, as the infallible and only guide to direct us in the way of duty. It is true, that much of the reasoning respects local circumstances, different from those under which we are placed: but it contains great and fundamental principles of truth, adapted to the state of man, under every possible circumstance, as a member of civil society and of the church of God. If "the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain," it surely is of the highest importance that we be not found guilty of this sin, either by what is commonly termed profane swearing, or by taking unlawful oaths of secrecy, or by swearing in an unwarrantable manner; in all of which ways the name of God is taken in vain, and his wrath incurred. We believe, therefore, that this letter will richly repay the reader the trouble of a careful perusal. For Zion can never arise from the dust and put on her beautiful garments, nor can the glory of the Lord our God be seen upon us, nor be delighted in by us, any farther than

we have a strict regard to *all* his commandments, and to *all* the ordinances of his appointment, and to none other.]

DEAR SIR—

The form of swearing now practised in Ireland, as it was the subject of conversation at our last interview, and a thing in behalf of which you then candidly offered me your *objections*: So I have both read and carefully excerpted from the Scriptures, and several authors upon it, considering the affair as impartially as I could: The result whereof receive inclosed, according to your earnest desire.

Swearing an oath before a judge in any Court, is a most solemn act of religious worship, in which the Almighty God is called upon as Witness, appealed unto as Judge and Avenger, in case of perjury, about that affair on which the oath is made.

Some nations in the world have one mode of performing it, and some another. Historians relate that in Greece when any one swore in judgment, he laid his hand upon the altar, and so gave his oath. That the Romans used the form of laying the hand upon a flint-stone, or else held up a flint-stone in the hand while any of them made oath in a court. It is storied also, that in some places the common custom is to have a piece of wood cut in the form of a book, with two leaves of the New Testament pasted on it, and that this is given to people, that they may kiss it in stead of the gospels, when they are called to swear. Besides, in some places, a *Psalter* is made use of that way, and in others, even a *Primer* has the honour of being solemnly kissed on that occasion.

However, as God alone has the sole right to prescribe unto men the particular way and manner how they are to behave in every piece of Divine Homage they pay unto him; so he certainly has the prerogative of directing men what mode, gesture or form they are to observe, when they celebrate this so solemn an act of Divine Service. Nor can any one be reckoned every way worthy of the christian name, who does refuse humbly and strictly to observe what the divine law directs, or copies out to him in this matter.

It clearly appears from many places of the sacred records, that *lifting up of the hand towards God in the Heavens* is the most ancient and approved form of swearing oaths; it being the form and manner of swearing practised by God, by the Angel of the covenant and by men.

1. That it is the form and manner of swearing practised by the great God himself, appears very evident from the following texts:

"Exod. vi. 8. And I will bring you into the land, saith the Lord, concerning the which I did swear (on the Margin, did lift up mine hand) to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

"Deut. xxxii. 40. For I lift up my hand to Heaven, and say, I live for ever.

"Nehem. ix. 7. 8. 15. Thou art the Lord the God who didst choose Abram—to give the land of the Cananites—to his seed—that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them (on the margin, it is, which thou hadst lifted up thy hand to give them.)

"Ezek. xx. 5. Thus saith the Lord, in the day when I chose Israel, and lifted up my hand, (margin swore) to the seed of the house of Jacob, &c. which form of lifting up the hand, is no less than six or seven times used in that chapter.

"Ezek. xxxvi. 7. Thus saith the Lord, I have lifted up mine hand; surely the Heathen that are about you shall bear their shame, &c.

2. Lifting up the hand unto God was the form and manner of swearing practised also by the Angel of the Covenant.

"Dan. xii. 7. He held up his right hand to Heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever, that it should be for a time, times and an half.*

"Rev. x. 5. And the Angel which I saw—lifted up his hand to Heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever—that there should be time no longer.

3. The same mode and gesture has been observed by men, as is evident from

"Gen. xiv. 22, 23. And Abram said to the King of Sodom, I have lifted up mine hand to the Lord the most high God—that I will not take any thing that is thine.

"Isa. iii. 7. In that day shall he swear (Marg. lift up the hand) saying, I will not be a healer, &c.

Now any who are acquainted with the Holy Scriptures will plainly see, that lifting up of the hand, and swearing, are generally spoken of as a gesture and action connected together. And certainly such a constant concurrence and harmony of imitable examples given unto us, in all ages of the Church, both by God, by the Angel of the Covenant, and by men, does amount unto an invariable law, and is equivalent to a divine institution. Wherefore, I conclude, that all persons who own the authority of God, and acknowledge the Scriptures to be the on-

* The man clothed in linen, here said to hold up his right-hand, is the same with the Angel, Rev. 10. 5. and the characters given to the man clothed in linen, Dan. x. 5, 6. are the same which Christ takes to himself in Rev. i. 13, 14, 15. which are no where in Scripture ascribed to created Angels.

ly rule of faith and manners, ought undoubtedly, with all reverence, strictness, and godly care, to observe and practice the above gesture and form of lifting up the right-hand unto God in the Heavens, always, when they are called before any judge, to give an oath upon any matter of due weight and importance.

Yet the present practice through Ireland, for the most part, in that solemn act of divine worship is this: The clerk of the crown, or some other person, calls upon the witness who appears before the court; then a book of some sort is given him; whereupon, said clerk of the crown, or some other, generally in a very rapid and abrupt manner, repeats the words of the oath unto the witness; that being done, said witness or jurant is required to lay his hand upon, and kiss the book: So that, in this case, the book touching, and kissing, is of such a mystical meaning, that it is here used both to signify the swearer's promise to declare the truth, and his solemn appeal unto God, as tremendous judge and avenger, in case of perfidy; none of these two last points being expressed in the oath.

Now as this present practice is directly contrary to all the fore-cited examples in scripture; so, it should be avoided for the following REASONS.

1. This mode of swearing is a manifest invasion on christian liberty; and a most unwarrantable surrender thereof, contrary to Gal. v. i. "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free." It can never be supposed, that God would abolish the ceremonial law, which was of his own institution, to give latitude unto men to impose a new one in the room of it: And therefore, according to the doctrine of the Westminster Confession, Chap. 21. § 1. "The acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshiped according to the imaginations and devices of men,---or any other way not prescribed in the holy scriptures," Deut. xii. 32. Mat. xv. 9. Hence it follows, that no power on earth can warrantably enjoin new significant ceremonies in the worship of God; such as, the religious touching and kissing of the gospels, in taking an oath, certainly are: For this is an usurping the prerogative of God, and an impeaching of the scripture, as if they were an insufficient rule; and consequently the imposing of this ceremony, and submitting to it, is an invasion upon, and a surrender of our christian liberty, contrary to Con. Chap. 20. § 2. "God alone is the Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such

doctrines, or to obey such commandments,---is to betray true liberty of conscience," Acts iv. 19. Chap. v. 29. 1. Cor. i. 23.

2. Touching and kissing the gospels, is a superstitious way of swearing; and therefore to be foreborn as a piece of will-worship, Mat. xv. 9. "In vain do you worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. "That this mode of swearing is superstitious, will be evident from these two arguments.

1. It is founded upon the Popish opinion, that the gospels are more divine and sacred than other scriptures; hence they must stand when the gospels are read, but may sit at the reading of the Epistles; whereas all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and every part of it equally divine, for the holy men of God, spake as they were moved by the holy ghost, 2. Pet. i. 21.

2. This way of swearing has the ordinary characters ascribed to superstition, by our reformed divines. It is entirely of human invention, none will pretend the least warrant from scripture for it. It is appropriated unto religion, when it used in swearing, which is one of the most solemn acts of religious worship. And it is of an ordained mystical signification, being ordained to signify the swearer's appeal to God, there being no appeal to him in the oath, either as witness of the truth, or as judge and avenger, in case of perfidy; nay, not so much as the mention of the name of God, except in the prayer at the close, for help to the performance, so help me God; and even this prayer, as well as the oath itself, is pronounced by the clerk to the deponent in the second person, you shall, &c. and then concludes, so help you God, none being required to rehearse the words of his own oath: So that swearing by God, and appealing to him, which is essential to every proper oath, is done only by touching and kissing the gospels, else it is not done at all.

Now that this touching and kissing of the book, should wholly and alienably be one's solemn oath before God, is truly shocking, and, at the very first sight, highly superstitious; especially, as we are expressly commanded, in all oaths which we are lawfully called to take, to swear only *by God, or by his name*, Deut. vi. 13. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God---and shalt swear by his name, Isa. lxxv. 16.---He that sweareth---shall swear by the God of truth. and accordingly the name of God is interposed in every oath we read of in scripture, swear unto me by the Lord, says Rahab to the spies, Josh. ii. 1, 2. Swear unto me by God, said the Amalekite's servant to David, 1 Sam. xxx. 15. Nebuchadnezzar made Zedekiah to swear by God, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. And Nehemiah did the same to the Jews, who had married strange wives, Chap. xiii. 25. Yea, we find, that when God made prom

ise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Heb. vi. 13. The surrogating therefore the touching and kissing of a book, in the room of the name of the great God, in the matter of an oath, as it is quite contrary to scripture practice and example, so it is manifest superstition and will-worship.

3. It is symbolizing with idolaters which is expresly condemned in scripture, Lev. xviii. 3. Deut. xii. 30. 31. 2 Cor. vi. 15. 16. 17. Rev. xiv. 9. 10. The Jews were not to sow their field with mingled seed, nor round the corners of their heads and beards, nor to print any marks upon their flesh, Lev. xix. 27, 28. because the Heathen nations around them did so: Neither were they to call God Baali, that is to say, my Lord, Hos. 2. 16. because it was a term used in idolatrous services among their neighbours. But swearing by touching and kissing the gospels, is a manifest symbolizing with idolatrous papists; it was from them that this mode of swearing was derived: See their ordo celebrations, at the beginning of the Roman Missal—celebrans osculator evangelium per cum dictum in ejus principiis, &c. i. e. He who says mass after he has read the gospel *must kiss it*, at the place where he began to read, except he says mass for the dead, or before the pope, cardinal, patriarch, archbishop or bishop, to whom the book and text of the gospel *must* be brought to be *kissed*, &c.

Now both from the express rule of the Romish Church, and their common practice, it is plain, that book kissing is a ceremony which runs through the whole of their worship (swearing not excepted) so that for persons who solemnly at baptism and the Lord's Supper profess the protestant faith, and yet afterwards to conform themselves to the above Popish rule, and adopt the said ceremony into such a special part of divine worship, as swearing, no doubt is a gross contradiction, and a most solemn conformity unto, and symbolizing with Papists, in one of their principal anti-scriptural mass-ceremonies. Those who partake with Rome-Babylon in her sins, must also partake with her in all those plagues denounced against her by Almighty God, Rev. xiv. 9. 10. 11.—If any man worship the beast, and his image, i. e. as Pool saith, committing idolatry after the Popish fashion, he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of God;—and have no rest day nor night, &c.

4. This mode of swearing, is not only a conformity unto, and symbolizing with idolatrous Papists: But is likewise itself actual idolatry: For, if the acts of touching and kissing the gospels in swearing, are acts of religious worship, directed both ultimately

and immediately unto the book itself, then, that is as palpable and gross idolatry as a man can be guilty of; for although we ought to regard the gospels as a very great blessing, and to use them with all decency and gravity; yet God no where in the law, or in his gospels, allows his worshippers to confer religious honour and adoration upon them. That is the honour he will not give to another; the praise he will not give to graven images, of books, or any thing else whatsoever, because it is idolatry.

Again, if touching and kissing the Gospels be acts directed unto God himself, through the book, as a means or token of respect unto him, whose will is therein contained; then it is actual idolatry as it is a worshipping of God in a stated manner, by and through a creature, which is all that the most rigid Papists plead for, in behalf of their image-worship. Council of Trent, Sess. 25. "We ordain images to be had and retained in temples, and that due honour and veneration be imparted unto them, not because it is believed there is any divinity or virtue in them, for the which they should be worshipped; but because the honour given to them is referred or ascribed to the samplar, i. e. the God, which they represent, that by these images which we kiss—we may adore *Christ*, &c.

Thus it is plain, that the Papists deny all proper divine adoration of images, whether images of Saints or books, even as positively as any protestant imposer or swearer of the book-oath can do. They pretend to worship God only before, by and through these images, yet the Protestant divines and casuists have clearly proven them guilty and chargeable with idolatry in this matter.

If it was actual idolatry in the Israelites to worship God by touching and kissing of the calves at Dan and Bethel, and by kissing of Baal's images; then certainly it must be also idolatry in Protestants to worship God in swearing, by touching and kissing of the gospels; for these gestures which were deliberately and designedly exhibited unto these calves and images of Baal, on purpose to have place in the Israelites worship, the very same gestures are here as deliberately and designedly exhibited unto the book set before the swearer, on purpose to have place in his worship, as significant both of his appeal unto God, and imprecation of his wrath, in case of perfidy.

5. This manner of swearing ought to be reformed, because it is not only actual idolatry, but also involves Protestant administrators and deponents into perjury. All true Protestants, at their baptism, solemnly vow to live and die in the Protestant faith, founded on God's word, in opposition unto, and renunciation of

all Popish ceremonies and idolatrous forms: then, upon the very next occasion, to go into open court, and in taking of an oath, solemnly to perform a Popish mass-ceremony, according to the forecited rule of the Roman missal, is, without doubt, a manifest counteracting of the said vowed opposition unto, and renunciation of Popery at baptism.

Moreover, those Protestants who abjure Pope and Popery, by swearing the abjuration and assurance-oaths, after the manner of touching and kissing the gospels, ere ever they are aware, do actually, in the very abjuring of Popery, really perform the kissing-part of the Popish mass-worship, directly contrary to the very oath which they are at that instant swearing; what an astonishing contradiction is this! and it is left to your consideration, if such a mode ought to be forborn, or not, when it is evidently no less than a manifest invasion upon, and unwarrantable surrender of christian liberty. A superstitious form of swearing. A symbolizing with, and conforming unto, idolatrous Papists in their gospels kissing, as has been proven. Yea, actual idolatry. And involving Protestants into perjury. What a pity then is it, that such a form should be so inconsiderately practised, under such a happy Protestant government, as ours is.

The several objections you then offered were,

Obj. 1. "What harm is there in it, although we use this form of swearing, by laying the hand upon, and kissing the gospels. There is no ill, no idolatry, in the least intended, in this case, either by the judges or deponents.

Answ. There is so much harm in it, that it is a hurting God's holy law and imitable example; it is affronting the divine majesty, when mortal worms thus take upon them to perform this act of religious worship, before his face, in a way and manner quite different from, and opposite unto, that mode which he hath so often exemplified to us in his word, the only rule of faith and practice. Thus it does harm to the honour of God, to the law of God, and to the souls of men.

There may be ill and idolatry enough in this action, although there be none intended by the judge or deponent. An intention in the idolatrous worshipper, is not always necessary to constitute an act of idolatry. The Israelites who set up the calves at Dan and Bethel said they only intended to worship the God that brought them out of the land of Egypt; yet the Lord charges them with the highest kind of idolatry, even Devil-worship, while they said they intended only to worship God by the calves, see 2 Chron. xi. 14. 15.—The Levites—Jereboam had cast them off—and ordained him priests—for the Devils and for the Calves

which he had made. It is certainly as really idolatry to perform an act of worship before God by kissing a book, as by kissing a calf, whether men intended it or no. Neither doth God judge men only according to their real or pretended intentions, but according to their actions.

Obj. 2. I humbly think it a matter of mere trifling indifferency, and a thing of very small moment, whether a man swear by touching and kissing the gospels, or lifting up of the right-hand, if a man be sincere, and swear the truth.

Ans. No man's real or pretended sincerity in swearing the truth, will be sufficient to sanctify such an idolatrous form of doing it, as this is.

Can that be a matter of trifling indifferency, whether we keep by our bibles, and observe the imitable examples of God and good men exhibited unto us therein, or no? What is it in the world that shall be reckoned a matter of great moment, if the laws of the great God, and the examples of good men, about the form of divine worship, shall be reckoned thus a matter of small moment.

Obj. 3. This form is only a mode or circumstance of worship, done to express devotion, and affect people with the weight of an oath, and the danger of swearing falsely.

Ans. This is a fair gloss put upon it, which it is not capable of. Has not the infinite wisdom of God found out, and laid down in scripture, as many methods and forms as are abundantly sufficient for expressing devotion? Dare any imagine, God has seen so defective this way, that Papists must needs invent new forms to help themselves, and their Protestant neighbours? Nor does this Popish form answer the end, for the people in those countries that use it, are not so much affected with the weight of an oath, and danger of perjury, as they are in those kingdoms where lifting up the righthand is used: And no wonder, for God has not promised to bless this Popish form, but has engaged to bless his own ordinances.

Obj. 4. Many great, good, and learned men in the kingdom, have used the form of the book-oath these many years; yea, even ministers themselves go on without scruple or hesitation at it; nor do they condemn it in their writings, or sermons. Surely if it were so bad a thing, they would have seen the moral evil thereof, and avoided it long before now.

Ans. No doubt there are some great learned men who do not condemn it in their writings, but practise it ordinarily; yet that is not sufficient to justify it, for it may be partly owing to the strong influence of common custom in the country. Custom is

a dictator that multitudes follow in implicit faith and blind obedience. Besides, it may be the effect of superficial thinking, few now examining closely into the matter to know whether it be sin or duty, superstition or true religion.

It is above 100 years since many good, great and learned men condemned it in their writings; of which take the following excerpts, 1. The reverend pious and learned Mr. Mather in his history of New England relates, "That Athanasius in the 4th century would use no rite in swearing, but that of lifting up the right hand. That Chrysostom (who died not till after the beginning of the 5th century) was quite against any book-oath, though it was not then much in fashion. That in the reign of king James the VII. a great many Protestants suffered persecution for their refusing said book-oath. That Pareus Rivet and Voetius, these learned and pious professors of divinity in Holland condemned it as unlawful." Doctor Goodwin, and the reverend Philip Nye, the last of which was one of the commissioners from the Westminster assembly to the general assembly of the church of Scotland, Anno 1643, reckoned touching and kissing the gospels in swearing, the worst of all the English ceremonies; and so did the reverend Jeremy Burroughs, and Dr. Owen was also of the same mind.

2. The national synod of the reformed churches in France being assembled at Gapp 1603, when the great Chamier was moderator, this was proposed unto that venerable body as a case of conscience. "Whether an oath could lawfully be taken before a magistrate by laying the hand upon, and kissing the bible? The assembly judged the affair to be of dangerous consequence, and declared, that it ought not to be used, but whosoever are called out to swear, should content themselves with the bare lifting up of the hand." Quick's Synod, vol. 1. page 239. So that scrupling at this mode is no new thing in the world.

Obj. 5. To refuse the yielding unto civil authority which commands the book-oath; and to contend any way about it, alledging a scruple of conscience in the case, is certainly a despicable weakness and biggotted nicety, which ought to be punished as the law directs, i. e. with fining, perpetual imprisonment, and confiscation.

Ans. It is to be hoped that Christian Magistrates would be so civil, as not to extend authority so far as to hurt men's consciences, and spoil divine worship, by rigorously imposing a popish ceremony on the consciences of protestants; for God alone is the Lord of conscience, and institutor of all the forms of divine ordinances, whether swearing, or praying, &c. They are the purchase of

Christ's blood, wherefore, it would be an affronting of Christ, and an undervaluing of his purchase, so tamely, without scruple, to yield up any one part of their matter or form, as if it were not worth while to plead for it. The man that will not be at pains to contend for the scriptural liberty of conscience, nor for the worship of his God, does not bid fair to fight well for the liberty of his country, or the honour of his king.

But if carefulness for the liberty of conscience, and attachment to the purity of worship, are called despicable weakness and bigotted nicety, then certainly on the other hand, to disregard the dictates of conscience, treacherously betraying its true liberty, and freely throwing up the true form of divine service, must be reckoned *religious prudence and moderate piety*. Neither is there so much as one statute of law, to be found among all the sacred records of Almighty God, or among the laws of these realms fondled thereupon, commanding and directing magistrates, to punish any Christian, with fining, perpetual imprisonment, and confiscation, merely for his being so tender in his conscience, and attached to the purest form of worshipping his God, that he declines to substitute the kissing part of mass-worship in room thereof which declension some are pleased to call trifling indifference, bigoted nicety, and despicable weakness; yet even in that view of things, it would be terribly severe, to indict, to fine, and perpetually imprison a man, for being nice, weak, and trifling only.

Ob. 6. But such is the present humour amongst some people, that if any man declines and avoids a compliance, with the prevailing form and custom of swearing, he may expect to be treated with a prodigious torrent of scorn, venomous taunt, and satyrical gibes, on every occasion both abroad and at home, and hissed at every where.

Ans. No doubt it is quite disagreeable to human nature, and very hard to bear such contempt and scorn, but certainly it is far safer to be with God in a way of duty, bearing all that idle venomous taunt with a safe conscience, than sinfully to comply with a *popish custom of superstition*, thereby incurring the frowns and wrath of Almighty God. The envenomed arrows of scorn and taunt has in all ages pierced through the more devout and sober part of mankind with many sorrows; yea, even glorious Christ himself was not exempted from this, nor his prophets and apostles, as is abundantly evident from their complaints unto God about that matter, yet on record; Psal. lxxix. 4. "We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us. Our enemies do laugh among themselves. I was the song of the drunkard, and the fool's scorn."

So that although the royal Psalmist was a man according to God's own heart, yet he, and the more devout sort of people in his time, were made the subject of the drunkards and babblers songs over their cups, and the laughing-stock of their graceless neighbours who dwelt beside them. And the prophet Jeremiah, though sanctified from the womb and ordained a prophet, although he still behaved most inoffensively, yet he says, Lam. iii. 14. I was a derision to all my people, and their song all the day. Though his advices and lessons to them were sublime and heavenly; his prayers and tears for them fervent and many; yet the wanton wits of his own country, diverted themselves in making and singing songs on him. Yea, the cloud of witnesses, Heb. xi. 38. had this trial of cruel mockings.

Job, an upright man, of unparalleled patience; yet complains, Job xvi. 28. My friends scorn me—I am a by-word of the people, and afore time I was their tabret. Yea thus the Son of God himself, in the mournful stanza, Psal xxii. 7. says,

All that me see, laugh me to scorn;
Shoot out the lip do they;
They nod and shake their heads at me,
And mocking thus do say,
Lo this is the man, &c.

Had Christ complied with the superstitious customs of the country wherein he lived; had the royal Psalmist, the prophets, and Apostles, gone along with the multitude in all the anticriptural modes and forms, much in vogue in their day, they had been in high esteem, caressed on every hand. Now whatever prodigious torrent of scorn a man may meet with for his avoiding a compliance with this Popish custom, yet he is but meeting with the very same treatment that Christ and his people met with. What a comfort is it to be a fellow-sufferer with David, Job and Jeremiah, &c. in this scorn and derision. A man is to be more careful to behave like those saints in this affliction, than to be meditating an escape, by sinful compliances with a piece of Popery. In short, he is certainly a weak, poor spirited, cowardly Christian, that cannot bear the noisy blasts of a loud laughter, and ridiculous taunt, for sake of his conscience, and the worship of his God; and that will be so easily scorned out of his steadfastness to the Protestant forms of worship, and mocked into a compliance with a Popish idolatrous mode of swearing oaths in judgment.

Obj. 7. No doubt scorn and banter is a difficulty that might be got over, but the magistrates would allow people no benefit of law to those who decline the book-oath; yea, they will fine and imprison them, while, mean time, poor honest men, perhaps, have no other way to support their families, except by what their

hands earn for them by sore industry. Now when people are imprisoned, their families must starve, so that this form must be complied with.

Ans. Consider, would it not be better to quit with a fine out of the pocket than to surrender the liberties of conscience? Is it not easier to bear an invasion on your property, than quit a part of the Protestant form of worship? Is it not safer to risk the imprisonment of your body (which will soon be locked up in the dungeon-grave however) than to forfeit a good conscience, and incur the displeasure of almighty God, by committing a piece of Popish idolatry and superstition? Is it right for a man to be more careful about maintaining his family, than for supporting the honour of those forms of worship God has exemplified in his word? Moreover, it is strange that a christian should talk as if he depended more upon his own sore industry, than upon the precious promise of a faithful God for supporting him and his family both. God has said, leave thy fatherless children on me, and I will preserve them alive, Jer. xlix. 11. Bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure, Isa. xxxiii. 16. But what if he should break his arm? What if he should lose the power of one side by a palsey? What if a judgment from God should blast all the labour and industry of his hands? Where then is the support for the family by this industry; surely down it falls to the ground.

Besides, fining, confining, and confiscation, cannot make a man one jot more unfit for the divine service of God in this world, or in the world to come; but a sinful compliance with this kissing part of the mass-worship, and substituting it, in the room of that form of swearing, by lifting up of his right-hand, which God has appointed in his divine law, has certainly the strongest tendency to render one obnoxious to the divine wrath here and hereafter, and may draw down upon him many miseries in this life, as well as making a man unfit for religious exercises in this world, and in the world to come; unfit for the society of angels and spirits of just men made perfect: For oftentimes those who sinfully throw up the forms of God's worship here, are not allowed the privilege either of its matter or form hereafter. But it would be harsh and uncharitable to say, that a Protestant government, or its magistrates, would fine and confine a man for avoiding to perform a Popish ceremony in swearing an oath.

Obj. 8. But if the civil powers did violently press the book-oath with severe penalties, might not a man then safely comply; and so let them who so rigorously impose this form upon his conscience take and bear the blame and sin upon their own heads?

Might not a man in this case warrantably say, between God and their conscience be it; let them answer for it, seeing they force a compliance, who can help it?

Ans. This is but a mean low shift; an invention of depraved wit, whereby a man cheats his own conscience, imagining himself secured from the guilt of Popish idolatry, and the desert of divine wrath, by rolling over the blame and guilt of this his sin upon his fellow-creature. But if the three children mentioned Dan. iii. 4. had acted after this manner, and talked at this rate, when so terribly threatened with a cruel death by the fiery furnace for refusing to worship a god in the way and manner that the civil powers then enjoined them. I say, had these children excused themselves, alleging, let Nebuchadnezzar, and his civil powers, take the black blame of our idolatry upon their consciences, let God and them deal about it, so we must comply and cannot help it. Would this kind of talk really acquitted them in the sight of God and reasonable men? No indeed. Had every body gone on this way, all Europe had yet been lying in the black gulph of Popish darkness and idolatry; we never should have heard of any martyrs or champions for divine truth and christian duty. All the laws of God enjoining us to contend earnestly for the faith, and acting as set for the defence of the gospel, would have for ever been trampled down in deep oblivion; and superstition for ever prevailed. But is it reasonable to suppose, that a master's urging and threatening a servant, under severe penalties, to commit sin, and the servant comply; will the master's wild threatnings entirely exculpate the servant from guilt, when they together have finished the forbidden act? No indeed, both of them in the impartial eye of all good laws, human and divine, will be held and reputed *Socii Criminis*, brethren in iniquity, and will undoubtedly be punished as such. Nor can it be denied, that there is so much moral evil in the least sin, as is sufficient to draw down divine vengeance for ever, upon the guilty heads of those that urged, and them that complied. Nay, in some respects, the complier is far more culpable than those who urge it; for, if every body would ingenuously declare their scruples of conscience upon that head, then no Protestant government would ever distress the conscience of their good subjects, for humbly declining to submit to the yoke of an old obsolete Popish ceremony.

Obj. 9. But seeing that in scripture it appears, that sometimes good men swore, using the form of lifting up the right-hand, and, at other times, used the mode of putting the hand under the thigh, as Abraham required his servant Eliezer to do, Gen. xxiv.

2. And as Jacob required Joseph to do, Gen. xlvii. 29. May it not thence be justly inferred, that the gesture, manner and form of swearing oaths is only an arbitrary circumstance of that piece of worship left by God to men's own option to use what gesture or form they themselves should think most proper to be used therein, whether kissing the gospels, or kissing a primer, a psalter. &c.

Ans. It is the opinion of orthodox divines and commentators on these texts, that this manner of putting the hand under the thigh was a form that inferiors used in giving their oath of fidelity to their superiors only. That, in all other cases, the form of lifting up the right-hand was still used, as is very evident from no less than sixteen different texts of scripture, both in the old and new testament, which you may see quoted at the beginning of this missive; and that the inferiors putting the hand under the superior's thigh, was not at all joined with the oath, but previous to, and quite distinct from the oath, wherein the common scripture form of lifting up the right-hand towards God in the heavens was used notwithstanding; as appears upon considering the 29 ver. xlvii. chap. of Genesis, where Jacob orders Joseph to put his hand under his thigh; it is not reasonable to suppose that such an affectionate son would delay it, but that moment comply with his devout father's dying command. Again, Jacob discourses to him at some length concerning his funeral and burial place, &c. Joseph replies that he was ready to fulfil his commands, and do as he had said; then in verse 31 Jacob requires his son's oath upon it, saying, *swear unto me*; and so he swore unto him; but not a word here of his putting his hand under the thigh, at the very instant of his swearing. No, for he had done that a good while before, as was hinted in verse 29.

Giving, but not granting, that these two instances of Eliezer and Joseph's putting the hand under the thigh, (which, by the by, are the only two that can be found in scripture,) were forms used at swearing in these two particular cases, yet it can only be *inferred thence*, that these two patriarchs of whose lineage Christ was to come, required these their inferiors to put their hands under their loins on these two occasions, thereby to signify their belief, that the Messiah, according to the flesh, would descend from their loins, which belief would influence them to be the more careful to do all duty, even unto the bodily concerns of such a sacred race: But it can by no means be *inferred thence*, that God hath left it free to the option of Papists, or any other set of men, to invent and mix with swearing this form of kissing gospels, psalters, or primers, or any other form; for this Popish mode is as dif-

ferent from, and contrary to, the form of putting the hand under the thigh, as it is opposite unto the established scriptural form of lifting up the hand in swearing, which Abraham himself used before that, on another occasion, Gen. xiv. 22. forecited.

Because that some one or two of the ancients, who used commonly to swear lifting up the hand, did, for certain reasons, in two private cases, in their own families, previous to the oath, require each a domestic, to use the form of putting the hand under the thigh, therefore, can it with any colour of reason be inferred hence, that God has left the modelling, fashioning and forming his worship, or any part thereof, into what form or shape blind and depraved reason should think best: Or, that he left it, particularly, to the option and arbitrary will of the Romish whore and her high priests, that they might invent whatever way of swearing they should in their pretended infalible sagacity think most polite and fashionable? And that their neighbours the Protestants also might have it at their free option to learn of them their ways and modes in this matter? Large wide inferences indeed from so remote premises. This would be to infer thence, that God had left it to men's own *option and arbitrary will* to be wise above what is written, or no, as they pleased: To worship him after the way he had, in all ages of the church, more than a dozen of times laid down in his word, or no, as they should think most proper. In short, this whole objection carries in its bosom an argument that relishes high of Romish logic, fit enough, no doubt, for supporting a *Popish mass ceremony*, but very bad for giving peace and comfort to the conscience of a true Protestant in dying moments.

However, if you once grant, that God allows, from the sacred oracles, unto the aspiring and ambitious will of men, a liberty to invent modes and forms of worship as they please, then we shall have every century a new set of forms. Still when people weary of any good old scriptural way, one new mode will be found out after another, every one of them farther from truth than another.

But certainly, if God would not allow a Moses to put one pin in the tabernacle, which was a type of the New Testament church, except what he had his positive orders for, then surely he does, by no means, now allow us, to put one point of gesture or form in the New Testament temple service, except what he has authorised. Ezek. xliii. 11. &c.

Obj. 10. Perhaps it is merely owing to the prejudices of education, that some people are so much against the book oath.

Ans. It may be so, but if that education be learned in the tem-

ples of the sacred oracles, and if it be from those divine tutors, the maxims of the holy law, that *some people* have gathered these prejudices against the superstitious kissing part of the mass worship being used in oaths, why should such an education, and these its prejudices, be rejected? And the same objection might, with much more reason, be retorted upon those who incline to use the book oath. Mean time, who can allege that it is from scripture they gathered *their* prejudices against the form of lifting up the hand in swearing?

Your charitable and candid construction upon any thing you may perceive amiss in this feeble search after real truth and duty, is humbly expected by,

Dear Sir,

Yours in sincerity, ——— ———

THE ANXIOUS ENQUIRY OF THE AWAKENING SINNER.

A SERMON,

*By the Rev. A. Bruce, late minister of the gospel, Whitburn,
Scotland.*

“Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas; and brought them out, and said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved?”—Acts xvi. 29, 30.

Man is endowed with powers to reflect on what is past, and to take a prospect of what is to come. These are by all daily employed in reference to the concerns of the temporal life; but in consequence of the blindness and stupidity that have seized the mind, these are seldom occupied about their higher spiritual interests, and when they are, it is usually in a very slight and superficial manner, unless they be aroused by the word of God, or some particular occurrences making a deep impression upon them: and when persons may be excited to serious concern about salvation even under the light of the gospel, their views and language are very indistinct, and attended with many mistakes about the subject. The question proposed by the jailor, is applicable to the case of sinners seriously awakened, the proper import of which may be more particularly opened up, which was the second thing proposed to be spoken to on these words.*

* This is the second discourse on the same text. The first, was published in our 4th volume, in which the author considers those convictions and awakening alarms usually produced in the mind of sinners, when they are made seriously to enquire about salvation: In the present discourse he considers the import of the inquiry in the text; and this he does in that definite and truly gospel manner, which entitles it to a warm reception from every serious Christian into whose hands it may fall. The improvement and exhortation appended to this discourse, which will appear in our next, we consider of the highest order of excellence; and we earnestly recommend it, especially to young persons and all such as are desirous to ascertain a knowledge of their true state in the sight of God.

The inquiry imports, 1st, a sense of the need of salvation arising from the affecting view of spiritual danger. These two are closely connected together, and the one necessarily follows upon the other. No reasonable person will seek after what he is already possessed of, or what he has no occasion for. A discovery of the sinner's lost and miserable condition, and of the absolute necessity of relief, is presupposed, and produces such anxious care about salvation wherever it is real, and accounts sufficiently for it. All mankind are equally in a state of ruin, having, like Israel, 'destroyed themselves.' They come into the world not only destitute of a title to life, but under wrath, and in subjection to the whole of the curse. But though this be the natural condition of all men, and the condition in which the greater part abide, yet all do not perceive or acknowledge it, or if they do, it is only in words. Some even adopt such principles as tend to fortify them against the belief of the woeful truth, and will make no scruple to avow that they are in no danger of perishing.—Of the legal condemnation and death that have come upon all the human race, through the primitive transgression, they have no notion. They either think they are not guilty, or entertain such slight thoughts of original or actual sin, as to imagine they run no hazard of damnation thereby. The forbearance of God towards them, and other sinners, in the present state, the temporal prosperity they may enjoy, together with some ill grounded opinions about the divine goodness and mercy, with various other deceits, lead many to think that mankind are not in that state of total depravity in which the scriptures and universal experience represent them to be, or that their danger and misery are such as to require that supernatural relief which the gospel reveals. Their language when interpreted amounts to this, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and stand in need of nothing: and they know not that they are poor and wretched, miserable, and blind and naked.' And 'those that are whole need not the physician, but those who are sick.' But such as are brought to speak the language of the text in earnest, see matters in quite another light; they see a multitude of transgressions covering them; yea thousands, and ten thousands of them lying upon their head, for one of which they cannot answer, and therefore, that destruction is their due, and must be inevitable, if security be not found against it. They behold vengeance following hard after guilt, and incensed justice putting on sword and buckler against them: the pit seems open before them into which they are ready to sink, and perish forever, under the sentence of the broken law, unless help be speedily afforded them.

Their conviction does not lie in a mere unaffecting persuasion of man's sinful and lost condition in general, like that of many who own the truth in speculation. It is particular; they take home all the charges to themselves, and see that they are the men: that they share in the common guilt and corruption belonging to the whole human family, and that all their life long they have been the workers of iniquity. Perhaps some noted and more heinous sins, in which they have exceeded, rise up to view above the rest; such as those mentioned by the apostle, in Ephs. v. 3—6. and elsewhere, as excluding from the kingdom of God, and 'for which the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.' It is personal guilt and danger which occasions such an outcry; so that they need not speak of others, when they have the sentence of death in themselves. They see they need not look around to find a wretched sinner, against whom they may point an accusation, as the proud pharisee when he prayed: but like the publican, afraid to lift up his eyes to heaven, and smiting on his breast, he arraigns himself assuch, and supplicates for mercy. He beholds no sinner now which he thinks greater, or even equal to himself: but will readily join with Paul when convicted, 'Of sinners I am the chief.'

2dly, When a person proposes this question, it shews that he considers salvation as in some way possible. Though he be yet destitute of it, he must view it as not only desirable, but also as attainable, otherwise it would be utterly vain to give himself any trouble about it. Such a persuasion of the practicability of attaining to salvation must lie at the root of all serious enquiries about the way, all applications for it, and all endeavours after it. The language of those who enquire and continue to ask for the way, however full of apprehension and doubts they may be, differs from the voice of those who say, 'there is no hope;—we are cut off for our part.' Despair would effectually check the use of all means, and suppress every rising motion or attempt to reach to that which is not only far off and difficult, but is deemed impossible. The angelic spirits that fell are ruined as well as men; but they are so beyond recovery. There is no help in themselves, nor yet in God for them. This they sufficiently know, and in their chains of darkness, they never put such a question as this, 'What must we do to be saved?' They know how vain and fruitless it would prove, while they are debarred from all relief at the hand of mercy, and the gate of bliss is for ever shut upon them. They have nothing but the fearful looking for of judgment, and can only exclaim, 'What have we to do with thee Jesus?' Or, with salvation? 'Art thou come to torment us before the time?'

In this respect, the state of every sinner on earth, however deplorable, differs from theirs: he is a proper object for mercy, and though he has not obtained it, he may yet obtain it. For him 'there is forgiveness with God, and plenteous redemption that he may be sought unto.' Before every man, yet among the living, there is set an open door, and salvation is not far from him, but within his reach.

The consideration of this, were there nothing else, must be supporting and cheering to an awakened soul. The thought of a bare possibility, though it should not come the length of hope, a mere peradventure, though it should not rise even to a probability, is sufficient to put them in motion, and proves a plank to keep them from sinking altogether. When certain and inevitable destruction is set before persons, on the one hand, and a possible salvation, with the least probability of escape, on the other, who could think of sitting still indifferent? The Samaritan lepers, when ready to perish for want, reasoned, if they continued where they were, they would certainly die; if they arose and went to the Assyrians, they might be preserved, and if not, they should but die; and therefore they did not long hesitate to take the course that gave them any prospect of safety. So may the alarmed soul say, 'If I abide here, destruction is inevitable: with the Lord there is mercy; perhaps the thoughts of my heart may be forgiven me: peradventure he may bid me live: I will go and make the experiment; I will adventure to present myself to the king, as Esther did, and if I perish, I perish.'

3dly, The anxious enquiry bespeaks a view of the excellency and great importance of salvation. Do men show such ardour, and make such ado about things they account trivial and of small moment? Why such outcry? Is there not an adequate cause? Yes; the most interesting that can ever engage a reasonable and immortal being. It is a question about life or death; and not that which is temporal, but eternal. He who before slighted and contemned salvation, can no longer do it, but reckons it of more value than all in the world. Instead of being needless, he considers it as the one thing most needful. His thoughts of it rise in proportion as the mountains of guilt appear to rise; and according as the burden that presses on him feels grievous, and the wrath of God dreadful, so will he esteem redemption to be precious: He will then know the force of these words, 'That a man cannot be profited, though he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; and that nothing can be given in exchange for it.' Could all the substance of his house prove a ransom for it, were it ever so great, he would give it: were he possessed of lands

and inheritances, of gold and rubies, he could willingly part with them all to procure a title to life. A beloved son, a first-born, he thinks he could offer in sacrifice for his transgressions: Yea, could the severest penances,—scourging, torture, or even death, inflicted on the body, avail for the salvation of the soul, he would not spare his own flesh; but could give his body to be burnt to escape a more dreadful death. No man is brought to take hold of salvation with light thoughts of it; without putting a superlative value upon it. That which includes no less than deliverance from sin, an abyss of wo, death and hell,—and the enjoyment of God, and all the bliss of heaven, they are convinced must be indeed ‘a great salvation.’

4thly, This, therefore, becomes the main and leading object, and for the present, as it were, the only one, engrossing his attention and concern; and from it the mind cannot easily be withdrawn, or diverted. The thoughts are so full of it, that out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth must speak about it; so that there is little care about other things, and little relish for any other theme, till the enquiry be satisfactorily answered, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ Time was when the man was ‘cumbered about many things,’ when a multitude of vanities, or worldly purposes possessed his mind, but these now give place to this one thing. This predominant passion, ‘like Aaron’s rod, swallows up all the rest.’ Thus, a man will forget the slight pain of a tooth or a finger, when life is in danger, or when he is sentenced to the scaffold. There is now none on earth that he desires, and there is nothing in heaven to suit him, but a Saviour. As the sweetest things, and the most delightful songs, lose their relish, when the heart is mortally sick, so, without salvation, to persons in this condition, all other things, even those which appeared most pleasant before, become ‘tasteless as the white of an egg.’ Should any of them be proposed as a relief from the inward malady, they would say, ‘miserable comforters are ye all.’ While their life hangs in doubt, how can they be but sad? What pleasure can the voice of singing men, or singing women give them? What can the dainties of the feast, or the richest wines avail to cheer the heart? Though their wonted companions or friends be all around them, and their family and outward affairs prosper, what satisfaction can they afford them, while they have not God for their friend; but an enraged adversary? In vain does the earth yield her fruits in plenty, and the flocks increase, while they cannot claim the blessing with them. Though the sun bring the day-spring from on high, and shed around his exilering beams, through the heavens distil their dews,—though the fields blossom

and the flowery vallies rejoice on every side, though the birds on every bough sing melody, yet they cannot rejoice with them, while they have no interest in the favour of nature's God, the former of all these things. They must adopt words, similar to those of sullen Haman, when invited to the royal banquet; 'All these avail me nothing, while sin, and its attendant wrath, stand sentries at the gate.'

If they apply themselves to their secular business, as necessity, or the calls of duty, require every man to do, with diligence, but in moderation, they will be disposed, if not to relax their wonted activity, yet to prosecute it with less eagerness of mind than before; while the hand is at work, their heart will be otherwise engaged. There are new devices that occupy their mind, and other employment 'which their hand now finds to do, that must be done with all the might.' They must now 'give all diligence that their heavenly calling and election may be made sure.' Their salvation is the urgent work to which they must apply 'with fear and trembling.' And being intent upon this, they cannot refrain from speaking about what has a relation to it, and may further them in it.

5thly, The inquiry implies uncertainty and doubt about the way of salvation. Persons do not ask information about what they well know, and clearly perceive: but they will naturally do so, in cases interesting, when they are ignorant, or at a loss how to proceed. The traveller who is very anxious to reach to a distant place, or, to settle in some commodious city, to which he knows not the way, when, at his first setting out, or when so far advanced, he finds himself in difficulties, will be solicitous to obtain direction, and see the need of a guide. A good may be in prospect, and earnestly desired, and yet how readily and certainly to obtain it, persons may be utterly at a loss to know. Doubts arise, and difficulties appear, by which they are reduced to a non-plus. So solicitude about salvation, especially in the beginning, vents itself in language of hesitation, and perplexity, in abrupt questions or exclamations, expressive of vehement desires mixed with doubts, fears of miscarrying rather than hopes. 'What shall we do?—' 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the most high God? Shall I come with thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil? Will the Lord be pleased with burnt offerings?' &c. Who shall ascend into heaven, to bring salvation down to us? Or, who shall descend into the deep to bring it up from thence? Rom. x. 6, 7. Thus David, in the vehemence of his thirst, exclaimed, 'O that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem!' when

there was a host of Phillistines in the way ' and on occasion of another difficult enterprize, ' O, who will bring me to the fortified city ?'

The convert must be like the penitent captives, who returned, ' asking the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward;—going forward with weeping and with supplications.' He will be ready to halt between two opinions; wavering and fluctuating between contrary resolutions, like one coming where different roads meet, not knowing whether to turn to the right or the left, till he hear a voice addressing him, ' This is the way, walk ye in it.'

The way of salvation could never have been discovered by any sagacity or search of human understanding: it would have been to every sinner unknown and untrodden, without the light of divine revelation, and without supernatural aid. This most desirable discovery had its origin alone in the secret cabinet of heaven, and lay hid in the archives of eternity, till the Spirit of God was pleased to make manifest the mystery: and the inward light and guidance of that Spirit is absolutely necessary, to bring any to a proper acquaintance with it, or to take the benefit of it, when revealed. The way to life, in man's primitive state, was clearly practicable by him from the law written on his heart, and from the positive promise made to him; and life was not unattainable by the proper use of the powers with which he was endowed. But now when fallen, and banished from the presence of God, he can no more find the way to return, or devise a method for recovering the divine favour, than he can make himself innocent again. Of this, natural conscience leaves him totally ignorant: it may condemn, but it cannot acquit; it may give deep wounds, but can apply no healing balm, nor restore peace. The law affords no information or assistance; it threatens, but comforts not; it is powerful to kill, but unable to give life; it is full, explicit, rigorous in its precepts, and loud in its cursings, but is utterly silent as to salvation, and a ground of hope. It is all darkness, whirlwind, earthquake, and fire: but God, as gracious, is not in that darkness, in the wind, the fire, or the earthquake; he comes speaking peace; and bringing salvation, only in 'the still small voice.' 'And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness.' 'Who hath known the mind of the Lord, and who hath been his counsellor,' as to this? 'O the depth, both of the knowledge, and of the wisdom of God!'

Sad, indeed, yea hopeless is the case of those who are convicted as criminals, and pursued by vindictive ire, to whose ear no word of salvation ever reached: but no less deplorable is the condition of those to whom it has been brought near, and who

remain still strangers to it; who are both ignorant of the gospel-righteousness, and averse to receive it, to whom it becomes a stone of stumbling, and a Saviour revealed a rock of offence, as is the case and condemnation of multitudes who have enjoyed the scriptures, and the preaching of the word: 'Seeing, they see not, and hearing they do not understand.' The gospel to many is hid, and all to whom it is so, are lost. So 'Israel, who sought after the law of righteousness, did not attain it—being ignorant of God's righteousness, they went about to establish a righteousness of their own.' This ignorance, culpable blindness, and aversion, are to be found in every unregenerate man. The only method of justification and salvation is that to which of all others there is the greatest aversion in the human heart, and is the last course to which any, left to himself, would choose. None ever did take it until they were directed into it, and brought under divine leading. Means are employed, ministers are to be instructors, and as such may be consulted; but these will not suffice, without divine teaching be superadded, that which is 'in demonstration of the Spirit, and with power.' He only 'who hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto Christ.' 'The sure word of prophecy shines as a light in a dark place, until the day-break, and the day star arise in the benighted heart.' This accompanied with the influence of the Spirit of truth, directs the steps of the blind, the doubtful, and the wandering, with certainty, into and in the way of peace. 'I will lead the blind,' saith the Lord, 'in a way they know not, and in paths which they have not trodden: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.' 'A highway shall be there, and a way, it shall be called the way of holiness,—the redeemed of the Lord shall walk there; it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools shall not err therein.' Isa. xxxv. 8. When a ray of the divine light breaks in, and the voice from heaven is heard, the soul is no longer tossed to and fro in uncertainty; its doubts and fears are banished, and it is relieved from the extreme distress, in which it was brought to its wit's end, so that it goes on safely, and enters a haven of rest.

6thly, The language here used, indicates, not merely ignorance, but mistaken views, and the legal disposition of the heart, as to the way of seeking salvation. The anxious enquirer speaks in the stile, and breathes out the spirit, natural to all who are under the law of works, and wedded to their own righteousness.—He takes it for granted, that if he be saved, it must be by doing something to obtain it, or to make himself worthy of it: that it must be by works, if at all, in one shape or other, wholly or in

part. 'What must I *do* to be saved?' So far he thought himself in no doubt, and that he was able to prescribe in general the way, and to dictate an answer without waiting for it. And in this he has the concurrence of all the sons and daughters of Adam, while 'the way of peace they have not known.' It is the thought that first and natively arises in their heart, and what they most readily express with their lips. This is assumed as the great fundamental principle in the natural theology of fallen men, *Do and live*: It was once sound divinity, but by the practical misapplication of it, it is now the fundamental and fatal error, by following which every sinner, instead of living, must certainly die.—Thus the young ruler, who yet respectfully applied to Christ for further direction, asked him, 'Good Master, what good thing must I do that I may enter into life?' Such language, in the mouth of every legalist, respects not merely the outward and ordinary means connected with salvation, which men are required to observe, but the condition they must perform, that they may have a title to pardon and eternal life.

Lastly, The enquiry imports, notwithstanding darkness and mistakes remaining, a disposition and desire to be instructed upon the interesting subject. While it makes a tacit confession of ignorance, it expresses a willingness to receive information, and an earnest request for it. This is a laudable and promising disposition of mind, and will be found in all who are truly humbled, and have a due sense of their errors and misconduct, and of the dangerous consequences which they have reason to dread. Knowing they 'lack wisdom, they will ask it of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not;—who resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.' 'It is meet to be said unto God, what I see not teach thou me: If I have done iniquity I will do no more.' For a satisfactory resolution of such a hard question, to whom should they go but to one that is greater than Solomon,—'the Interpreter one of a thousand?' 'To whom can they go, but to him, who has the words of eternal life? who has compassion on the ignorant, and those who are out of the way.' They are now in earnest made to cry for this wisdom, which is more precious than rubies, and to lift up their voice aloud for understanding; that in finding it, they may find life, and obtain favour of the Lord. With meekness and self-denial, they will be willing to sit down at the feet of Jesus, as Mary did, to hear his words; or even to fall down at the feet of his servants, as this man did at the feet of Paul and Silas, and as Cornelius, an honourable centurion did, at the feet of Peter, who was sent by divine order, and had come at his intreaty, 'to shew unto him the words by

which he and all his house might be saved.' They will not think themselves either too wise, or too high, to be instructed. They will not now fly from the word, contempt or hate ministers, or scoff at them and the gospel, as perhaps they had done; and as the proud and covetous pharisees, who heard the words of Jesus himself, and derided him: but they will call for them, as Cornelius sent to Joppa to enquire for Simon; they will be ready to go to the high places of concourse, and to join the vulgar throng in resorting to the mountain of the house of the Lord, that they may learn his laws, and attentively to listen to them, 'standing in the temple, and speaking all the words of this life.' When assembled for such a purpose, their language will be like that of the same devout centurion, 'We are all here present before thee this day, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.'—Or if they have not opportunity of entertaining these heavenly guests in their houses, or if they cannot find faithful spiritual guides in the public temples, they will not think it too much, in the wakened fervours of their spirit, when roused from their midnight slumber and the bed of sloth, 'to rise and go about the city, in the streets, and broad ways,' in quest of satisfactory information, about the object of their pursuit, wherever they can find it. They will forget toil and peril, honour and dishonour, good report and bad report, in seeking after the suitable medicine for their wounded souls, and the true bread and water of life. They will not scruple to go to the fields, to the deserts, to the mountains, to cross rivers and hills, in their famine and great thirst, to hear the word of the Lord, adapted to their case; as multitudes went out into the wilderness, when the rousing voice was crying there in the ministry of John; and as a number followed Christ over the sea of Tiberias, enquiring after him, and when they saw him, accosted him with the great question, 'Rabbi,—What must we do that we may work the works of God?' John vi. The Ethiopian treasurer, after having taken a very tedious and difficult journey, to attend a solemn festival at Jerusalem, when returning in his chariot, was reading and searching the scriptures that contained the words of eternal life; but being at a loss to understand what he read, and desirous of farther information, when his back was turned towards the deserted temple, its priests and unprofitable ceremonies, in all which he had not seen nor heard any thing of Jesus, he found, by the way, 'in Gaza which is desert,' a travelling evangelist, a fit interpreter to clear his doubts; with him he disdained not to enter into religious conference, but took him up into his chariot, requested his exposition, and having heard him preaching Christ, he forthwith desired to be baptized, 'and went on his way rejoicing.'

Souls under real concern, and serious exercise, will acquire a more nice and discriminating taste: their ear will try words, as the mouth tasteth meat.' They will not be pleased, as many are, with an empty form of religion, or every form of doctrine that may be delivered to them. If they are under the Holy Spirit's tutorage, they will not believe every spirit, nor listen to every one that makes himself a prophet, and would take upon him to be an adviser. Ignorant, erroneous, and careless guides, they will be afraid to trust; lest when the blind lead the blind, both should fall into the ditch. Formal, lifeless, legal, Christless preaching, they will disrelish, learn to avoid, and detest, as nowise calculated to afford them what they seek, 'rest to their souls.' Under such prescriptions, they will find themselves in a case like that of the woman who had been long under a grievous disease, and after she had spent her all upon physicians, was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, and found no relief, till she eagerly thrust forward and touched the hem of Christ's garment.

For a time, indeed, under the spirit of bondage, while they think only of working for life, influenced merely by legal fears and hopes, they may submit themselves to the orders and discipline of those hard task-masters, who daily exact the full tale of brick without affording straw, who beat them, and cry, 'Ye are idle, ye are idle.' Though hereby they may be kept a-stir, and busy, yet they will find it is to no purpose; that they still 'labour in the fire, and weary themselves with very vanity.' They are made to groan under the intolerable yoke, and fatigued in the greatness and difficulty of that way, they must stand and ask for another; and will be glad when any can direct them into it. If a Moses and Aaron be sent to speak of deliverance, how welcome will their message be? If any herald of peace, proclaiming tidings of good things, appear, how beautiful will his feet be upon the mountains, and how sweet the accents of his voice? If any, furnished with the tongue of the learned, can 'speak a word in season to the weary,' how swift will they be to hear, and how greedily will they drink in the reviving cordial? If any gospel-minister, if any spiritual man, any fellow Christian, even of the lowest order, can give them one useful hint, or the smallest glimmering light to shew them the right way, or to tell them of the approach of morning, they will thankfully receive it. They will enter into the chamber of the sick for a school, and even a noisome prison as a church for instruction: as the jailor in that of Philippi, heard his converting sermon, from the mouth of his prisoners, whom he submissively and honourably address-

sed, as angels of God, however maltreated, condemned, and covered with wounds, and but a few minutes before loaded with chains; 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'

The loftiness of man must be laid low, and the haughtiness of man humbled, when the Lord, in the day of his grace and power, is to be exalted. Those who gloried in their wisdom, and would have been moved with indignation at a charge or insinuation of ignorance or blindness, exclaiming with the pharisees, 'Are we blind also?' must be converted and become as little children, in entering into the kingdom of God. They must be willing to become learners, yea, fools, that they may be wise.—The fierce must become gentle and tractable: 'The wolf shall dwell with the lamb; the lions and the leopards must lie down with the kid, and the calf,—and a little child shall lead them.'—Rulers in Israel must stoop to be instructed in the first principles and mysteries of religion, with which before they were shamefully unacquainted. Rabbis, and learned scholars, like Paul the pharisee and proud disciple of Gamaliel, must unlearn their lessons, and fall down on the ground, and cry with him, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' He arose from the earth, and needed one to lead him by the hand, under both his bodily and spiritual blindness, and must receive relief through the ministry of Ananias, a disciple of Jesus, whom he had persecuted, who came to him, laid his hand upon him, and said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.' Acts ix. 17.

Persons in this disposition of mind will be far from dissembling with God, or men, in asking counsel, while they resolve to retain their prejudices, and to follow only their own views and inclinations. They will not be as the people of old time, who sought to God in their trouble, when alarmed by the strokes that fell upon them, but in doing so only 'flattered him with their lips, and lied unto him with their false tongues:' nor as those who would go to enquire of a prophet, as some did go to Ezekiel, while 'they set up their idol in their heart, and laid the stumbling block of their iniquity before their eyes;' concerning whom the Lord declared, that he would not thus be inquired of by them, 'but he would answer them by himself.' They will not act the part of that band left in Judea, at the time of the captivity, who had conspired together, and formed their resolution to go down into Egypt, yet sent a deputation to Jeremiah to pray for them, and to seek an answer from the Lord, with a solemn promise and resolution that they would obey, and follow the direction that

should be given them, whatever it might be; whom the prophet, in the name of the Lord, charged with gross hypocrisy and dissimulation in this; which the event soon discovered, when the answer did not correspond with their own purposes; when Johanan and all the proud men, said unto Jeremiah, 'Thou speakest falsely:' and as the same people afterwards impiously replied, when reproved for persisting in their old idolatries, when in Egypt, 'As for the word that thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee, but we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven,—as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah.' The truly contrite enquirer, though not rashly and presumptuously, yet in sincerity of heart, will say, as those who heard the words which God spake in thunderings at Sinai, 'All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do, and be obedient.' Hasty resolutions, under an awakening qualm, are often formed and uttered, that are as suddenly forgotten and broken,—when the old attachments of the heart are not changed, or when unexpected difficulties present themselves in the way of adhering to them: of which the behaviour of the young man in the gospel, who came running to Christ, and professing himself ready to comply with any new injunctions, and to submit to any terms that might be required of him, that he might enter into life, gives a striking example: No sooner was he put to the proof, by our Lord saying to him, 'Go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me,' then the secret bias of his heart, and his inordinate love of the world were discovered; and the imperfection of his obedience, and defect of will and power to perform any thing, of which he boasted, clearly demonstrated: he paused, stopped, and went away grieved, for he had great possessions. So also the impulse, and fair unreserved promise of another convict, who said to Jesus, 'Lord, I will follow thee wheresoever thou goest,' were, probably, all of a sudden checked, and brought to nothing, when Jesus answered, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.' The man that attempts to build, before he hath first deliberately counted the cost, or he that goes forth to war with a superior force, without considering before hand, whether his strength be competent, will soon be obliged to relinquish with shame, the rash undertaking.

Yet, with another spirit, from better principles, and with sincerer aims, similar language, and unreserved professions, will

accompany a thorough conviction, and incipient conversion, which, through grace, will be attended with happier effects. The subjects, forsaking their own way, and abandoning their own thoughts, resign themselves wholly to superior guiding. They will no longer be disposed to dispute the terms that may be prescribed, whatever they may be; no longer to quarrel with the new covenant way of salvation. They are no longer in the humour of Naaman, when he was first told by the prophet, what he must do in order to be recovered from his leprosy; who murmured, and turned to go away, leper as he came, in a great rage, because Elisha had not come forth to him, when standing with his chariots, his retinue, and presents, at his gate, to say and do, so and so, as he thought he would have done, but only sent a message to him, to go and wash in Jordan seven times, and be clean. He said, 'Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers in Damascus, better than all the rivers in Israel?' till he was brought to a better mind, being more coolly and wisely advised even by his servants, even as he had undertaken the journey on the faith of the report and information of a poor captive bond maid; they said to him, 'If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather when he saith to thee, wash and be clean?' So the Spirit of the Lord brings down the heart of all who are to have the benefit of salvation, implicitly to follow his direction, as to the cause, the means, and whole manner of it; so as not to be offended at the easiness of the way proposed, or to find fault with it as too strait and difficult: but they are made to say, 'Good is the word of the Lord that he hath spoken: The way of the Lord is right; the just shall walk in it.' They are determined to close with Christ on his own terms; though it should be to the suffering the loss of all things, even of those they accounted the greatest gain and delight, as the apostle expressed the change of his own views and disposition, Phil. iii:—though it should cost them the denial of themselves, the renouncing their own righteousness, a war with principalities and powers, and parting with all the world; though it should be at the expense of the painful crucifixion of the flesh, with the most darling affections and lusts; though they must pluck out a right eye, and cut off a right hand or foot; though they be required to take up a cross, and to suffer famine, tribulation, persecutions, tortures, and death. They must be resolved that none of these things shall move them, to hinder or deter them from their fixed purpose of entering into the kingdom of heaven. So the prudent merchant at sea, when he sees himself in hazard of suffering shipwreck, will not scruple to cast all his goods and lading how

ever valuable, the fruit of all his long labour, and toilsome enterprises, over board into the sea; in the hope of saving his life, he accounts the loss of all other things, in competition with it, as nothing.

(*Improvement in our next.*)

DECLARATION OF WAR.

The following preamble and resolutions, which are beautiful in more respects than one, we copy from the Ithaca Chronicle. They were adopted by the Ludlowville Artillery, at a company parade on the 1st instant:—[*N. Y. Obs.*

Whereas we view with serious alarm the wide-spread evil of intemperance—assuming as it does the character of a merciless and desolating ENEMY—destroying not only the property, physical strength, and life, but also the moral worth and reputation of many of our most valuable citizens; thereby bringing them under tribute and dragging them into disgraceful slavery and ruin:

And whereas, on occasions like the present this enemy has, by his foul stratagems, lulled into security, and then shorn the locks of many of our citizen soldiers—so that, with all their imposing military appearance, when they have said, “We will go out, as at other times,” to battle, they have found that their strength was departed:

And whereas, in view of the progress of this enemy, and the manner in which he has intrenched himself throughout our country, we are of opinion that he is more dangerous to our free republican institutions, and liberties, than any foreign foe: Therefore,

Resolved, Being mustered for military improvement and discipline, that we hereby wage a war of extermination against this common enemy, intemperance.

Resolved, That our manner of warfare shall be a voluntary and an entire abstinence from the use of ardent spirits, on all occasions like the present.

Resolved, As the Holy Scriptures are eminently calculated to promote the best interest of any people, and as upon the Bible, rest the safety and prosperity of our republican government; that the amount, which a pernicious custom has almost compelled us to pay, on occasions like this, for ardent spirits, shall be given to the “Female Bible Society of the town of Lansing.”

EUROPE.

Various articles from British and French papers show an *uneasy* state of things. The courts of London, Paris and Vienna have sent extraordinary missions to the Russian head quarters, and the emperor had met some of the envoys at Odessa—but, as immediately after he was to return to his army before Choumla, there does not appear to have been much time allowed for conferences. It is given out, that the three powers are acting in concert, but for what precise object is not stated. It must, however, have relation to the invasion of Turkey, and be designed either to arrest the progress of the Russians, or arrange a division of the spoils; and it would seem from the gathering of a large British naval and military force at the Ionian islands, &c. the actual landing of a considerable French army in the Morea, and the collection of a powerful Austrian corps near the Turkish frontier, that a resort to arms is contemplated, should negotiation fail to induce the emperor Nicholas to abandon his supposed intentions, except through the devotion and bravery of the Turks themselves. If the *latter* are sufficient for this purpose, we see no reason to apprehend a disturbance of the general repose of Europe; but we think that Nicholas will only be prevented from the capture of Constantinople for the reason that he shall not find himself able to capture it! As we have heretofore observed, to possess that city is a national feeling among the Russians—and there is some cause to believe that when Constantine relinquished his right to the throne of Russia in favor of Nicholas, it was understood that he should be established at Constantinople. The possession of that city and the parts adjacent, is a matter of mighty importance, to Russia. It would, at once, give her command of the whole commerce of the Black Sea, already very large and mightily increasing, and enable her, in the supply of seamen and materials, to become a strong naval power, having a controlling influence over the whole trade of the Mediterranean. As at present situated, Russia cannot become a formidable naval power. Her ports are not only frozen up a large part of the year, but she needs commerce and ships to create seamen—and these she would soon have, and to a great extent, if quietly seated at Constantinople, and

in command of the rich countries around it. A London paper says that, "rather than surrender the navigation of the Black Sea to Russia, we shall expend our last farthing." But that trade must be surrendered, if Russia holds the passage into the Black Sea—unless yielded by courtesy, or in the way of compromise. We incline to the opinion that Nicholas will pursue his projects, spite of the remonstrances of all the rest of Europe; and if he shall overcome the sultan, a general war must be expected. To their natural advantages and strong fortifications, however, the Turks appear to have added much devotion and courage. The Russians, years ago, had advanced to the points which they had reached at our latest dates, and yet were compelled to relinquish the hope of gaining Constantinople. Whether their present superior means will accomplish the long entertained wish of adding the chief part of Turkey in Europe to their dominion is yet to be seen. Great Britain, France and Austria are badly conditioned for a long war—their finances are embarrassed, and their people have not yet fully recovered from the late extensive and desolating operations in which they were engaged—but a late report of the revenues and means of Russia shews them to be flourishing, and that mighty empire has not felt the effects of war, unless partially, as other nations have. We many years ago said, that Great Britain, in introducing and employing the Russians, to assist in adjusting the "balance of power," as it is curiously called, in southern Europe, was raising up a master spirit that might embarrass her own operations, if not reduce her power and humble her pride. The progress of population and improvement on the southern shores of the Black Sea, late a wilderness, or only the abode of wandering Tartars, has been not less rapid and astonishing than the growth of our own western country; and the peaceful possession of the rich provinces of northern Turkey, in Europe, with the port of Constantinople, will, in 20 years, produce results not less extraordinary. Hundreds of thousands of the bone and the sinew of Italy, France &c. the laboring people, seeking an improvement of their condition, will flock to Turkey, so soon as the gloomy and intolerant Mahometan shall yield his place to the more liberal policy of Russia—to that policy which effected the things mentioned on the borders of the Black Sea, and built great cities where the Tarter lately pitched his tent.

RUSSIA AND TURKEY. Late accounts from Constantinople affirm, that the inhabitants, so far from being dismayed at the approach of danger, are, on the contrary, assured and full of enthusiasm. The immense army which is prepared to take the field, in the event of the enemy pushing on for the capital, has been stated at 300,000; probably the number is overrated, though the spirit and animation of the troops are undoubted. The opinion is expressed, that the sultan does not place much reliance upon the defences of Choumla, but that he intends to wait the approach of the enemy, and when necessary, display the sacred banner, on the walls of Constantinople, and then concentrating his myriads, fight the great battle. The army under Hussien Pacha, at Choumla, is said to amount to 100,000 men.

Corfu, Aug. 21. The three ambassadors opened their conferences on the 10th of the month, at the house of count Guillemont; on the 11th they were at that of Mr. Stratford Canning, and on the 12th at the residence of M. Riebaupierre. Since then they have been continued in the same order. It is said that the three ministers are about to quit Corfu for the seat of the Greek government, which has been transferred to the isle of Spezzia, in consequence of the sickness which still prevails at Poros and Egina.

Ibrahim pacha will not leave the Morea unless on compulsion, and is well prepared to resist any attacks upon him. Letters from Janina says, that the Albanians and Turks, who left Ibrahim, had an engagement on quitting the Morea with the garrison of the forts of Lepanto, and made themselves master of one of them.

The empress of Russia was about to leave Odessa for St. Petersburg.

An article from Zante gives the following account of the state of Greece—"It is impossible to form any idea of the miserable state of Greece, after more than six years of devastation. From Janina (which is now nothing more than a few cabins under the cannon of the castle on the lake, lately repaired by the Turks), to Thermopylæ, there does not exist a single village. The flocks are consumed, the lands lie uncultivated, and the few Christians who yet remain in Thessaly, are daily destroyed by the sword, by famine, or by sickness.

Phocis and Bœotia are reduced to deserts, and the only inhabitants of Attica are those in the Acropolis, of which the Mahomedans have taken possession, resolved to bury themselves in the ruins rather than capitulate. The Morea is equally desolate, and Ibrahim Pacha, in retiring, leaves the country a prey to anarchy and anarchy."—*Niles' Register*.